



AAM Idea Sharing: Recent Threads from the AAM Discussion List

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As accounting marketers, we often find ourselves in uncharted territory. Whether you're working on a new project, weighing the options of a tricky decision or looking for some quality brainstorming, there's a one-stop-shop to meet your needs: "Connected," the AAM discussion list.

Ask a new question or poke around in the archives to view past discussions – but either way, you'll find that AAM members are more than willing to share their advice, opinions, resources and secrets of success.

Here is a particularly insightful response from the last month.

The question:

After a little more than a year at my first job in accounting marketing, I recently became marketing director at a new firm. I'm very excited about this opportunity and challenge to grow professionally and personally. This is my first director-level position, so needless to say, it's a bit daunting and overwhelming - all in the best way possible.

I've already learned quite a bit from my previous position that I've applied to my position here. But I do know that there are many seasoned veterans on this list. So, if anyone has any general words of wisdom or food for thought, please share! I'd love to hear from others about their similar experiences when they started. What principles and key points have you kept close and followed throughout your career?

It's always nice to hear a word of encouragement or advice - so I'm sure others on this list could benefit from anything useful.

The answer:

Here are my top 9 suggestions - most learned the hard way, by messing it up:

1. The more numbers you can tie to a project or in reporting results, the better it will be received.
2. When you create something, get it perfect (proofread yourself, have someone else proof it, maybe even read it out loud) before you give it to your boss(es). Even though many accountants aren't that good at writing, they seem to be pretty severe critics of other writers.
3. On the subject of writing, if something needs to be written for your firm (letters, ad copy, newsletter articles, etc.), it seems to work best, at least for me, to ask the accountants where you can research to find the information or sometimes I interview them to get the information. Then, I write it up and send it to them to edit. Most don't want to take the time or don't have the time or aren't good enough at writing to write the initial draft themselves even though they may have any number of suggestions once you give them your draft.
4. Communicate everything a lot more than you think you should have to. I don't mean filling everyone's inboxes with stuff you've done, but when you do something that might affect people in your firm, be sure they know about it. If you are introducing a new process or making other changes, let everyone affected know about it. If you are training, don't expect to tell them once and have them understand it well enough to do it the way it was designed to be done (Can you hear the note of experience from having done this poorly in the past here?)

5. Carefully evaluate everything from a cost vs. benefit standpoint. That's how accountants run their businesses. If you want their respect, you will want to follow the same process. "I think this would be a good idea," isn't good enough for them. Find examples of why and justify with value provided.

6. Find a way to connect with each person. Don't avoid someone because he/she seems to be opposed to you personally or to your position, or to marketing in general. It goes back to that old saying, "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." I think in most firms, there is someone who will always play devil's advocate and to them, you may appear as an expense rather than a value. They will always be testing and challenging you. While you can grow from the experience, it's not an easy growth process.

7. Systemize everything you can. We use a "project plan" for everything from events that we plan to what we do for new team members. We try to list all of the items in the process and assign responsibility to one or maybe two people and have a date for completion. If you're ever hit by a truck, someone else can start from these, but the greatest benefit is that you don't have to re-create the wheel every time.

8. If you can, have one person that you are responsible to and be sure that person is "in your court," always willing to defend and support you as well as mentor and help you. That person should have enough sway (power) with the other partners to clear the way for you. It's really hard to be managed by a committee.

9. Be very diplomatic about the information you get and with whom you share it. It seems like many in our position become a conduit for information that not everyone in the firm has, especially with reference to personnel. Maybe it's just our personalities, but people confide in us more than they do with some in the firm. I have learned that if the issue is something that needs to be discussed at a higher level, the best advice I can give is for them to talk to their supervisor/manger.

Okay. That's enough from me. This started out as a "top 5" and now it's up to 9. Best of luck to you. Let me know if I can ever help out.

-Linda Slothower, Marketing Director, Contryman Associates, P. C.

This wasn't the only insightful answer to this question. To view the full exchange, [click here](#). You must be a member of the AAM Discussion List to access this feature. Search for "Advice for the newbie."